British and French artillery on the Isonzo Front, so as not only to ensure the safety of Italy against any enemy concentration, but, what is more important, to shatter the enemy's forces, to inflict a decisive defeat on him, and to press forward to Trieste and to get astride the Istrian Peninsula?

25. The strategical advantages to be gained by such action appear to be very great. It would probably be a great surprise to the enemy.

Its strategical advantages

The action would be fought on enemy territory. It would enable the Italians to deploy their full strength. It would compel the enemy to defend a longer line. It should, therefore, have an immediate effect in relieving the Russian, Roumanian, and Balkan Fronts. It might enable the Allies to attack Pola, and probably either to destroy the Austrian Fleet, or to force it to action, or drive it out to become a prey to our submarines. This in turn should hamper the enemy's submarine campaign in the Mediterranean. Moreover, it could be accomplished without any additional strain whatever upon our shipping. It would have a moral and political effect of the greatest consequence, and would be a good counter to the enemy's successes in Roumania. It would enable the Allies to take advantage of a period when the weather on the Western Front is unfavourable for the development of a great offen-

sive. It would, however, be absolutely necessary to have a clear understanding that, within a certain period of time, the heavy guns should be withdrawn to enable the British and French Armies to pursue their offensive on the Western Front.*

* When General Cadorna pointed out that this condition vitiated our offer of guns, it was unconditionally withdrawn by me at the Conference.